

Femmes d'Esprit



A Fond Farewell...

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Magazine*



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HONORS MATTERS: TRANSITIONS, NOT DETAILS

Dr. Amy Bass, Honors Program Director



At commencement you wear your square-shaped mortarboards. My hope is that from time to time you will let your minds be bold, and wear sombreros.

- Paul
Freund, Harvard
law professor

A graduation ceremony is an event where the commencement speaker tells thousands of students dressed in identical caps and gowns that 'individuality' is the key to success.

- Robert Orben, comedian

I have always seen a bit of a paradox in the ceremonies that surround commencement each May. After four years of encouraging students to think, discuss, question, and analyze, we then ask them to sit quietly and listen to a bunch of people, many of whom they have never met, tell them what it is they are experiencing and what the future holds for them. There is no space for those who are graduating to raise their hands and ask questions of the

chosen commencement speakers. But can you imagine how fabulous that would be, if in the middle of the ceremony someone sitting in the audience of caps and gowns raised her hand and said, "Ummmm, I don't know if I agree – can you expand on that point?"

Think: after four years of critical thinking, it all comes down to a two-hour ceremony in which a menu of various overused aphorisms are assembled as advice.

Turning such adages on their heads should be the goal of any well-educated person. One of the best instructions lent to me by one of my own mentors – and this should be familiar to any of you who have written a research paper with me – is to ignore the maxim that "God is in the details." This well-used saying was first advocated by German-American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a pioneer in minimalist design who also famously emphasized that "less is more." Mies was a path breaker, there is no doubt: his influence on what is now called "skin and bones" architecture was modernism personified.

But in terms of mottos, I think Mies got it wrong, as explained to me by this professor who, after reading a lengthy graduate paper of mine, told me that God was not in the details, but rather the transitions. It's how connections are made between and among the particulars that create significance in this world, not in the isolated specifics themselves.

A FOND FAREWELL:

FINAL WORDS FROM SOME OF OUR SENIORS

Kathryn Tyranski

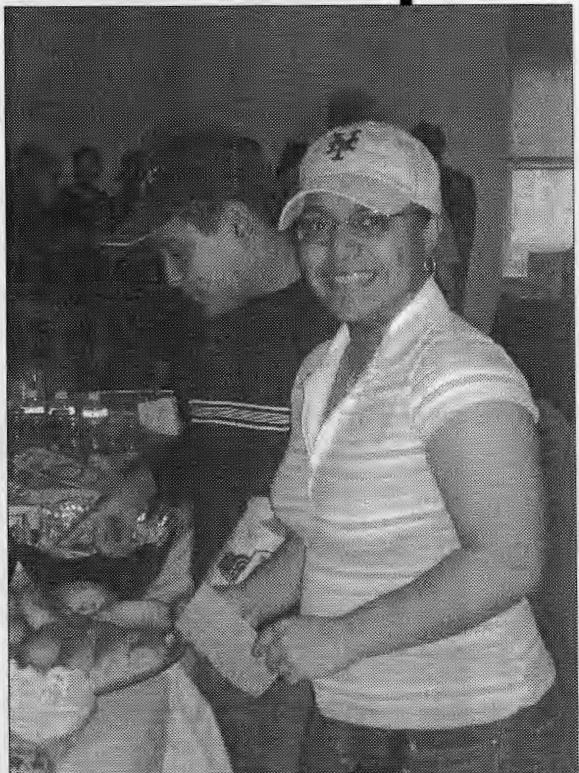
My Honors experience...my Honors experience is...hard to describe with in words because there is SO much to say. Where should I start? Three National NCHC Honors Conferences. Two and a half years as editor in chief of *Femmes*. Three years as a member of the Honors Board. Four years of dedication and hard work. All of this has led to the achievement of three majors: Communication Arts, English, and Women's Studies. To say the least, my Honors experience has been vast, rewarding, and fulfilling. I have grown academically and intellectually from my many Honors courses that have run the gamut from discussions about race and ethnicity to Greek tragedy to politics and the world. I have grown personally since my freshman year. I have had proud moments (publishing my first edition of *Femmes* in the Spring of my freshman year). I have had challenging moments (staying awake to publish issues of *Femmes* and complete my homework). I have had fond memories (my trips to Salt Lake City, New Orleans, and St. Louis at NCHC Conferences). I am so glad to have been a part of this program. I will truly miss it. It's been so much fun and so much work and so worth every single minute. However, all journeys must come to an end and I exit Honors with immense strength and confidence. I have emerged as a critical thinker and writer. I have emerged as Kathryn Tyranski, grounded in all that I am and all that I will become. So what's next for me? I will be attending Fordham University next Fall to begin my Masters in Communication and Media Studies. Wish me luck!

My Honors experience wouldn't have been as fulfilling without everyone who was there with me. My classmates: Ruthy, Shirley, Nisha, Betsy, Jennifer, Lacy-Ann, Cindy, Esther, and Giau. My professors: Dr. Bass, Dr. Smart, Dr. Rawlins, Dr. Quinn. I thank ALL of you for making me who I am today. I hope we keep in touch! It has been my honor to experience all of this with you.

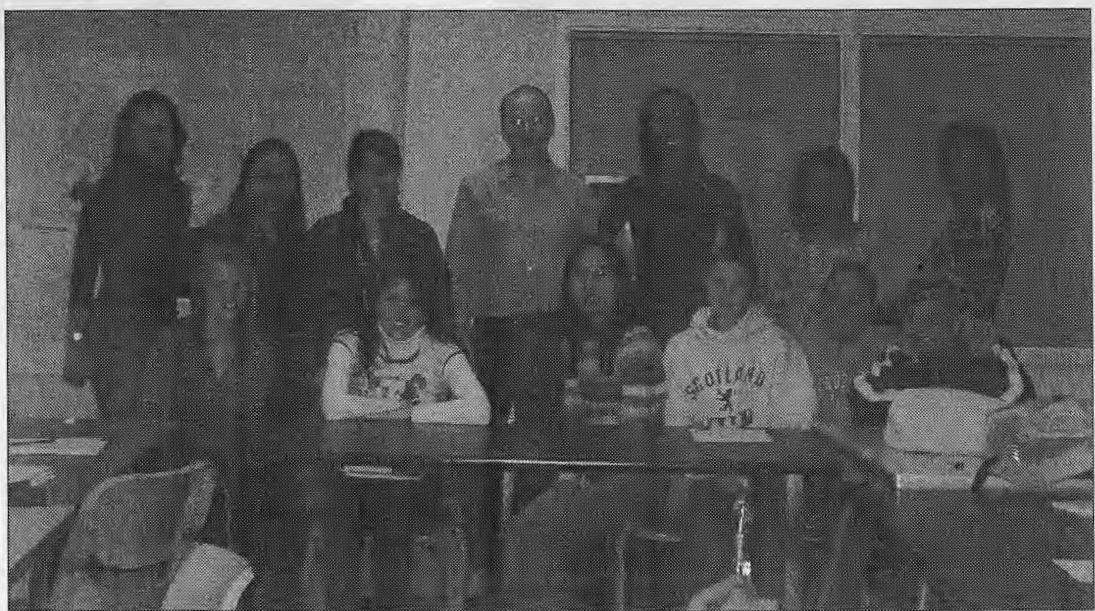




A FOND FAREWELL: LOOKING BACK



Photos: K. Tyranski



MY LIFE, MY HONORS, MY COMMENCEMENT...

MY NAME:

Elizabeth: "Betsy" Skrip

CHILDHOOD AMBITION:

To fly

FONDEST HONORS MEMORY:

Dancing it up at our class's first Honors Winter Holiday party

PROUDEST HONORS MOMENT:

presenting at the NE-NCHC Conference in Atlantic City

FAVORITE HONORS MOMENT:

Genetics and Identity: designing a DNA test to show that Darth Vader, Luke, and Leia are in fact related

BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Getting to Rockefeller Center in December to see the tree (Just going to have to come back!)

INSPIRATION:

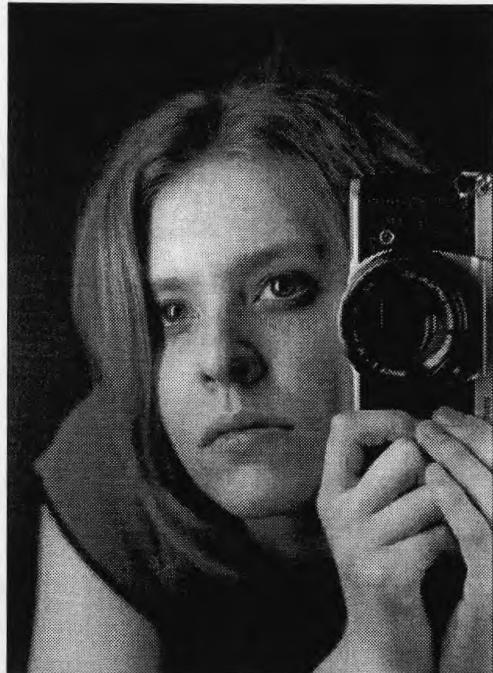
My family, my teachers, that life is such a beautiful mystery

MY PLANS:

Rochester Institute of Technology: MFA in Medical Illustration

MY HONORS:

Journeying with all of you and gaining "Wisdom for Life"



MY LIFE, MY HONORS...

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY COMMUNICATING THE ROLE THAT THE HONORS PROGRAM PLAYS IN THE LIVES OF OUR EXTRAORDINARY SCHOLARS.

MY NAME: DR. DANIEL EUGENE GARCIA

CHILDHOOD AMBITION: ROCKSTAR

FIRST JOB: DISH WASHER

LAST PURCHASE: CAR RIDE

INDULGENCE: IRISH WHISKY



FONDEST MEMORY: READING TO MY CHILDREN THIS MORNING

SOUNDTRACK: KIND OF BLUE/MILES DAVIS

RETREAT: MOUNTAIN LAKE

WILDEST DREAM: CAN'T TELL

PROUDEST MOMENT: WALKED FOR MY PhD

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: PASSING DOCTORAL ORAL EXAM/BIKING CALIFORNIA COAST

ALARM CLOCK: MY SON

Dr. Daniel Garcia, Professor of History.

Photo: J. Turner

PERFECT DAY: SUCCESSIVE ANIMATED AND INTERESTING CLASSES WITH INTERESTING STUDENTS WHO DID THEIR READING

FAVORITE MOVIE: THE EXORCIST (AHHHH)

INSPIRATION: ZAPATISTAS

MY LIFE: SOCIAL CHANGE (REVOLUTION?)

MY HONORS: GOOD FATHER/GOOD TEACHER

A PROFESSOR'S PERSPECTIVE: ON PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

Dr. Daniel McCarthy

A year or two ago, Dr. Bass asked faculty members to think about courses they would like to offer in the Honors Program. I suggested Philosophy of Law, a course that I had taught in 2003 as a regular Political Science course. While I had enjoyed teaching that course, at the end I felt a bit frustrated, as I sometimes do at the end of a course, because I felt that most of the students had not learned much. They answered the exam questions and wrote adequate papers, but I did not think that most of them really understood much more about jurisprudence at the end than they had at the beginning. They knew, more or less, what to write in response to examination questions, and they

had picked up some impressive-sounding legal terminology and other minutiae, but most of the class still reacted to cases idiosyncratically; that is, they would want to rule for defendants whose cases they sympathized with, and against those whom they did not like, without any reference to principle or social consequences. The philosophic theories that we had studied were invoked, if they were mentioned at all, as convenient embellishments to their arguments for conclusions that they had already reached. This was dismaying because development of an ability to rationally justify

a conclusion and anticipate its implications was pretty much the point of the course.

So, I thought about how to improve the course. Too many of the readings had been dry and over-long and the connections between the theoretical texts and the cases had not always been as clear as they should have been. However, I wanted to be careful not to cross that thin line between "accessible" and "dumbed-down" assignments. I chose a new anthology, and de-

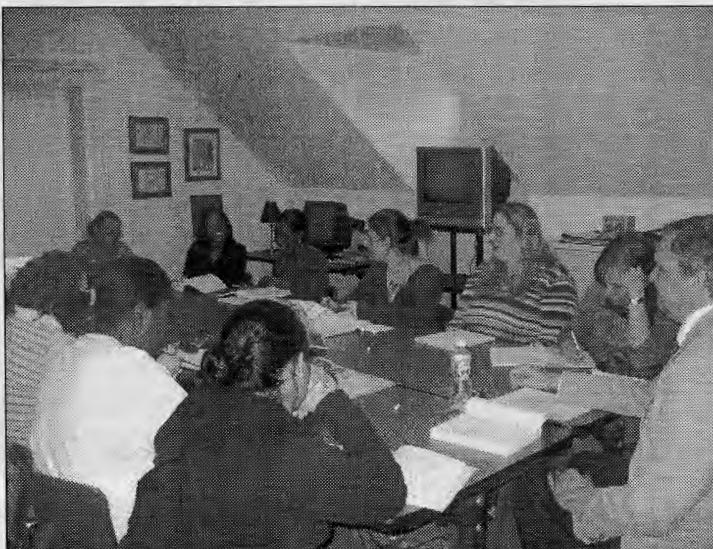
cided to put a number of articles and cases on Angel.

Then, when Dr. Bass asked for volunteers to teach in Honors, I was eager to offer this course, since I hoped that in an Honors class there

would be more students with the patience and commitment to stick with readings that would still be challenging and sometimes, while important, a little boring.

After the first few weeks of Honors Philosophy of law, I wasn't sure about how well the course was going. The Honors students were, as I hoped, more conscientious than most students in other courses, but there were more lulls in discussions than I had anticipated; there were days when I wished someone would just BS for

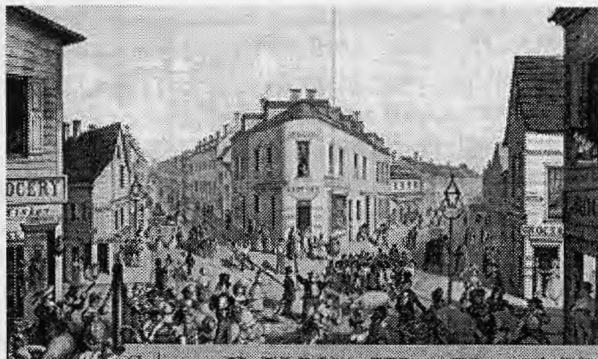
Continued on page 23



relinquished the area to the British.

While slavery is usually known to be a topic of America's southern history "in 1703, 42 percent of New York household had slaves, compared to six percent in Philadelphia and two in Boston," as stated in the exhibit. Going to this exhibit was truly an enriching experience for my peers and I. Through the educational material provided by the exhibition, we were able to explore the vital role that slave trading and slave labor had on the commerce that made New York one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

Photos: Yahoo.com



RUNAWAY



On the 30th of January 1778, a negro boy named Alick, about fifteen years of age, had on when he went away: a check shirt, reddish coloured jacket, breeches, stockings and hat. He is branded on the breast with the letters R.W.

Whoever will secure said boy, or give information of any person or persons harbouring him, shall receive Four Dollars reward from Richard Wright in George Street, No. 22.

All Masters of Vessels are forbid harbouring, or carrying off the said boy on their peril.

BY THE KING'S PATENT
THE GENUINE ESSENCE OF
PEPPERMINT,

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SAMUEL B



LOOKING BACK: WHAT'S HONORS BEEN UP TO?

On Thursday, April 27, Honors students featured their scholarly undertakings from the academic year at the 21st Annual Honors Conference Day. Attended by faculty, administrators, and students from across the campus, the program featured the research projects of nine honors students - Binh Phong, Shonda Gaylord, Allison Ippoliti, Rebecca Mui, Camellia Safi, Megan Skrip, Kathryn Tyranski, Sarah Worthington, and Milena Tercheva - as well as the findings of the Honors Senior Symposium Class. Student co-ordinator Tung Nguyen, '07, helmed the event with Honors Director Dr. Amy Bass; the many folks who attended considered it to be a rousing success.



Honors Program Director Dr. Amy Bass stands with Dean Richard Thompson and Shonda Gaylord, '08, who focused her honors contract on her major of environmental studies

Photo: A. Bass

Sarah Worthington, '07, speaks with Dean Richard Thompson about her project on Two-tone Ska.

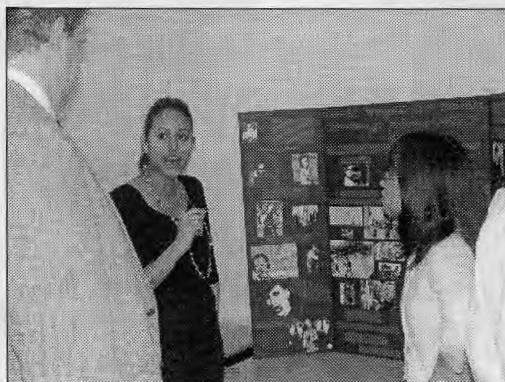
Photo: A. Bass



WHAT'S HONORS BEEN UP TO? CONTD.

Bekki Mui, '07, discusses her honors colloquium project on punk with honors freshmen Katie Fitzpatrick and Melanie Glass.

Photo: A. Bass

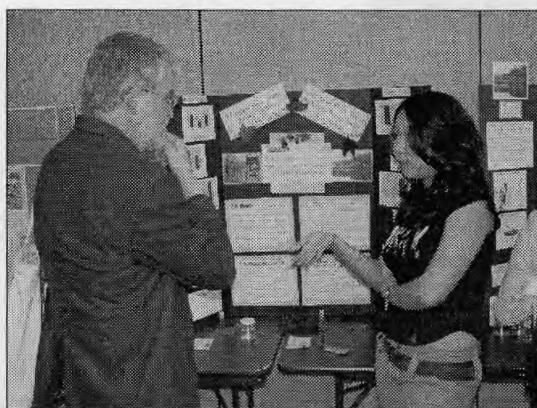


Camellia Safi, '07, speaks with Dr. Daniel McCarthy and classmate Tung Nguyen about her project on the Columbine High School shootings.

Photo: A. Bass

Bekki Mui, '07, explains her project on the mainstream adoption of punk style politics to President Stephen J. Sweeny.

Photo: A. Bass



Dean Richard Thompson talks to Binh Phong, '08, about her Honors Contract project in environmental studies.

Photo: A. Bass

A PROFESSOR'S PERSPECTIVE: ON PHILOSOPHY OF LAW CONTD.

Continued from page 15

a while, even if she hadn't read the material, just to get something going. However, I was encouraged by the short papers the students were doing each week. Almost all of them demonstrated careful reading and were well written; there were no embarrassing, elementary mistakes, and there were few unclear, muddled sentences.

But much more important than the absence of serious errors was the fact that in every batch of papers there was at least one that was genuinely interesting. With increasing frequency, students were making good points about the texts, considering issues from a rich variety of perspectives, and making connections that had not occurred to me. These interesting papers came not from two or three stars of the class, but from everybody. I do not want to exaggerate, most papers were competent but routine, however throughout the course there was a steady, growing supply of insightful, perceptive papers. I was now in the unusual position of actually being eager to grade the assignment.

Even more encouraging than the papers was the mid-term exam, in which the class was asked to apply the theoretical approaches we had studied in the first half of the course to a variety of hypothetical and actual cases. Almost without exception, the answers showed the students "got it." They understood and could

articulate how different theories could be applied to a variety of issues, and how society might be better or worse off with the use of these approaches. Although some of the answers were partially "wrong," in that the author misinterpreted a theorist or misapplied a law, almost all of the answers demonstrated an ability to apply abstract ideas of justice to concrete cases, weigh the advantages and disadvantages of theories, and consider the potential consequences of precedents.

The exam, then, made me feel much better about the course. There are still days when I think there is not enough discussion or debate, and I need to restructure the class so that I talk less and the students more. As I read the papers after class, I often want to ask, why didn't you say that this morning? That is sometimes frustrating, but it is much better than wondering why the students don't seem to have anything at all interesting to say.

Your Life, Your Honors...

Join us in our new initiative to better acquaint the extraordinary members of the Honors community via our feature entitled, *My Life, My Honors*. Request the brief survey page (as exemplified on pages 18 & 19) at Femmesdesprit@yahoo.com, fill it out, send it in and your submission may be published in the next issue of Femmes.

THE LAST FAREWELL: TO THE CLASS OF 2010

Dear Class of 2010,

Welcome to the Honors Program! You are about to embark on a new and exciting journey. We, the Class of 2006, hope your participation in Honors enhances your overall college experience. Not only will you be challenged academically, but hopefully you will make wonderful friendships that unite you during your travels at CNR.

We seniors ended our undergraduate journey by exploring how you would begin your own journey as freshmen. Our task: to choose one book out of a possible five as your Common Freshman Read, which you will discuss in Honors 101: The Self in Context. Over the course of our senior year, we ventured through different genres, with different characters, and through different experiences. We spent many hours in and out of the classroom reading, discussing, and debating the criteria and values the Freshman Read should encompass. Our reading list included *The Color of Water* by James McBride, *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd, *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom, and *The Zen of Oz* by Joey Green. All of these books were notable choices for the Freshman Read, and all have contributed to the creation of our criteria.

Our criteria were many. One of the most important things we wanted out of the novel we picked was the idea of a journey. Every good story recounts a journey and throughout life, we ourselves take many journeys. The college experience you are about to embark upon is a journey! To say the least, journeys are an unavoidable part of life.

We also wanted our chosen novel to embody several themes, including those of education, diversity, unity, and identity. Education is a vital part of life, whether it be in the classroom or through life experiences. We are constantly learning, and we wanted a character that undergoes a learning experience. Diversity is another area of importance that needs to be acknowledged because it surrounds us in the form of race, gender, class, sexual identity...the list goes on.

We also wanted our novel to be one that unites you as a Freshman class. The novel should be a shared experience, and we hope that you will be able to relate to at least one of the characters in some way. We wanted to choose a novel that focuses on identity. The Honors Freshmen experience in INS is one that focuses on your identity: who you are, who you want to become, and everything that is involved in those processes. Your identity is a journey unto itself, and we wanted the Freshman Read to embody that important theme. But wait, there are more criteria! The Freshman Read should be about a woman's journey for identity. We believe that a strong female protagonist is appropriate as we attend an all-women's college. Through your experience at CNR, your definition of "woman" will grow and expand. We wanted our novel to have a great female character. Finally, we wanted it to be enjoyable. We want you to want to read it!

With all of these criteria in mind, to start you off on your journey, we have selected *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd as the Freshman Read. It is an extraordinary look at the life of Lily, a young girl who in one summer manages to go through a life-changing journey, one that would leave her with the realization that the journey to find her mother was also a journey to find herself. We believe '*The Secret Life of Bees*' satisfies all of our criteria. Above all, this is a story about determination, compassion, understanding others, and finding one's place in the world. As you discuss this novel in Honors 101, we hope that it will help you to explore the following questions and themes, which go hand-in-hand with our criteria: **Education:** What is the value of a formal education versus life lessons, or lessons gained through listening to others, listening to oneself, and even through observing nature? **Diversity:** How have you been influenced to define others and yourself? Why are prejudices upheld? **Stories of Self and Parents:** How has your identity been shaped by parents and other authority figures? Has your overall perception of these individuals changed over time?

One of the most valuable lessons *The Secret Life of Bees* imparts is the idea that you do not journey alone. As you read this novel, put yourself in Lily's shoes and think of your college journey. Like Lily, you will have friends, family, and professors to guide you on your path of academic and personal fulfillment. Know that there will be breaks in the path and bumps on the road, but you must travel on, the way Lily does. Let Lily's strength inspire you, and you will inspire yourselves.

May you have a wonderful Honors experience at CNR!

Sincerely,
The Class of 2006